

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
DOTE-00 FMC-01 INR-07 NSAE-00 CG-00 DLOS-09
OES-06 SP-02 USIA-06 AID-05 NSC-05 TRSE-00 SS-15
STR-04 OMB-01 CEA-01 AGR-05 FEAE-00 ACDA-07 INT-05
XMB-02 /102 W

-----191531Z 007625 /47

R 191103Z APR 77

FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3080

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EGEN, EEWT, ETRD, EWWT, US, UR

SUBJ: PORT CONDITIONS: CURRENT SITUATION AT VENTSPILS PORT

1. CONGEN OFFICERS WERE GIVEN BRIEFING AND TOUR OF VENTSPILS PORT RECENTLY BY PORT DEPUTY DIRECTOR, ALEKSANDR ALEKSEYEVICH REIMER AND PORT'S CHIEF TECHNICIAN, YURIY NIKOLAYEVICH STEPANOV. THE FOLLOWING MATERIAL IS BEING PROVIDED AS OF POSSIBLE INTEREST TO THOSE FOLLOWING CURRENT DEVELOPMENT IN SOVIET PORTS.

2. VISIT REVEALED THAT PORT IS CURRENTLY IN EXPANSION STAGE WHICH WILL BROADEN ITS ROLE BEYOND CURRENT IMPORTANCE AS SOVIET UNION'S PRINCIPAL OIL PORT ON THE BALTIC, AND MAKE IT INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT IN US-SOVIET TRADE. PORT IS BEING GIVEN NEW DIMENSION BY LARGE NEW SUPER PHOSPHATE LOADING, UNLOADING AND STORAGE FACILITY CURRENTLY UNDER CONSTRUCTION THERE BY OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM CORPORATION (OXY). THE NEW FACILITY IS SLATED FOR COMPLETION BY YEAR'S END, ALBEIT AT LEAST ONE QUARTER YEAR BEHIND

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SCHEDULE. WHEN COMPLETED IT REPORTEDLY WILL EMPLOY ABOUT 1,000 WORKERS AND, ACCORDING TO THE DIRECTOR, WILL ENABLE THE PORT TO HANDLE 100,000 TONS SUPER PHOSPHATE AND ONE MILLION TONS AMMONIA ANNUALLY.

3. IN ADDITION, WORK IS PROGRESSING IN MAIN PORT ON FOUR NEW BELT LOADING DERRICKS DESIGNED TO INCREASE

CURRENT RAW MATERIAL LOADING CAPACITY THREE AND ONE HALF TIMES TO 2,500 TONS PER HOUR. THIS FACILITY ALSO SCHEDULED FOR COMPLETION THIS YEAR. DEPUTY PORT DIRECTOR INDICATED THAT A CONTAINERIZATION AREA AT PORT ALSO HAS BEEN SET ASIDE ON PAPER BUT THAT NO DATE HAS AS YET BEEN SET FOR BEGINNING CONSTRUCTION OF CONTAINERIZATION FACILITY. IT IS THUS LIKELY THAT CONTAINERIZATION PORT WILL ONLY TAKE SHAPE IN 1980-1985 PLAN. PORT CONTINUES HARD PRESSED TO HANDLE GRAIN ALTHOUGH IT CAN DO SO IN A PINCH. IT HAS NO VACUATORS OR OTHER SPECIAL GRAIN UNLOADING FACILITIES AND NO CHANGE IN THIS SITUATION IS IN SIGHT.

4. PORT CURRENTLY HANDLES ABOUT 2,450,000 TONS DRY CARGO AND BETWEEN 22-24 MILLION TONS OIL ANNUALLY. ACCORDING DEPUTY DIRECTOR PORT CAN HANDLE ANY CARGE CONSIGNED TO IT BUT PRINCIPAL CARGOES IN PORT AREA AT TIME OF VISIT WERE RAW AND SEMI-FINISHED PRODUCTS SUCH AS SULPHUR, PIG IRON, ALUMINUM INGOTS AND VARIOUS ALLOY ORES. DIRECTOR SIDE-STEPPED QUESTION RE TOTAL SIZE WORK FORCE BUT GAVE FIGURES OF 400 DOCKERS AND 350 WOMEN EMPLOYEES. PORT OPERATES THREE SHIFTS AROUND-THE-CLOCK.

5. DEPUTY DIRECTOR PUT PORT STANDING CURRENTLY BEHIND THAT OF LENINGRAD AND RIGA BUT AHEAD OF TALLINN AMONG SOVIET BALTIC PORTS AND ALLEGED IT APPROXIMATELY SIZE OF NIKOLAYEVSK. SLOW MOVING VENTSPILS RIVER ON WHICH PORT LIES HAS RELATIVELY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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DEEP CHANNEL AND DOES NOT HAVE SERIOUS SILTING PROBLEM. DEPTH OF RIVER CHANNEL AT HARBOR WAS GIVEN AS 9.5 METERS, SEAWARD CHANNEL AT 12.5 METERS. DEPUTY PORT DIRECTOR INDICATED THAT, "AT INSISTENCE DR. HAMMER", NEW CHANNEL IS BEING CUT AT VENTSPILS RIVER SEAWARD APPROACH TO ENABLE PORT TO HANDLE TANKERS OF 60,000 TON RANGE.

6. PORT DIVIDED INTO THREE SECTIONS, SO CALLED IMPORT, EXPORT AND OIL PORTS, ALL OF WHICH HANDLE BOTH LOADING AND UNLOADING. OF THESE, OIL PORT IS BY FAR MOST IMPORTANT. SUPER PHOSPHATE FACILITY BEING CONSTRUCTED ON FRINGE OF OIL PORT. VISIBLE OIL TANKS AT OIL PORT SEEM OLD AND BADLY CONSTRUCTED, BUT PIERS AND LOADING/UNLOADING EQUIPMENT MODERN AND EFFICIENT. PORT DEPUTY DIRECTOR CLAIMED TURN-AROUND TIME FOR TANKERS WAS ONLY 10-12 HOURS.

7. PORT DIRECTOR CLAIMS THAT ONWARD TRANSPORTATION FROM PORT EXCEPTIONALLY EFFICIENT AND THAT PORT DOES NOT HAVE SAME RAIL CAR AVAILABILITY PROBLEMS "COMMON AT OTHER SOVIET PORTS". HE ATTRIBUTES THIS TO RELATIVE LACK OF INDUSTRY OR OTHER FACILITIES IN VENTSPILS AREA COMPETING FOR AVAILABLE RAIL CARS WHICH HE SAID MAKES RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RAIL AND PORT AUTHORITIES UNUSUALLY CLOSE AND COOPERATIVE.

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INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00
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R 191103Z APR 77
FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3081
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

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COMMENT: PORT CURRENTLY IS MESSY AFFAIR WITH SEMI-BOMBED OUT LOOK DUE TO RAZING SOME OLD BUILDINGS AND FACILITIES AND SIMULTANEOUS CONSTRUCTION NEW FACILITIES. IT CLEARLY IS IN PROCESS OF RECONSTRUCTION WHICH ULTIMATELY WILL SIGNIFICANTLY RESHAPE ITS ROLE. OTHER THAN OCCIDENTAL PETROLEUM CORP. PROJECT, AMERICAN INVOLVEMENT IN VENTSPILS PORT UP TO NOW HAS BEEN RELATIVELY LIMITED. PORT DIRECTOR INDICATED THAT ONLY TWO U.S. SHIPS CALLED AT PORT IN 1976, BOTH CONNECTED IN SOME MANNER WITH OXY PROJECT. HE ALSO NOTED SOMEWHAT REGRETFULLY THAT IN PAST, BECAUSE OF ALLEGEDLY DISCRIMINATORY U.S. TRADE PROVISIONS, PORT HAD TURNED TO OTHER COUNTRIES, MAINLY EAST GERMANY AND HUNGARY, FOR PORT EQUIPMENT AND HE EXPRESSED HOPE FOR CHANGE FOR FUTURE. WITH COMPLETION OXY PROJECT AND MATERIALIZATION OF PORT'S CONTAINERIZATION PLANS, IT IS CERTAIN THAT VENTSPILS PORT WILL PLAY INCREASING ROLE IN US-SOVIET TRADE.

SIGNIFICANT AMOUNT OF SUPER PHOSPHATE AND AMMONIA
CARGOES, FOR EXAMPLE, ARE EXPECTED BE CARRIED IN
U.S. BOTTOMS.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
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vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/30edb4a2-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
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